Washington Park Arboretum

BULLETIN

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Washington Park Arboretum

The Arboretum is a 230-acre living museum displaying internationally renowned collections of oaks, conifers, camellias, Japanese maples, hollies and a profusion of woody plants from the Pacific Northwest and around the world. Aesthetic enjoyment gracefully co-exists with science in this spectacular urban green space on the shores of Lake Washington. Visitors come to learn, explore, relax or reflect in Seattle's largest public garden.

The Washington Park Arboretum is managed cooperatively by the University of Washington and Seattle Parks and Recreation; the Arboretum Foundation is its major support organization.

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ABOVE: *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis* 'Milky Way' flowers profusely in June, and the pointed, white bracts, the glamorous part of the inflorescence, are larger than usual. After bloom, the tree produces attractive pendant, red berries much enjoyed by birds. This variety of *Cornus kousa* may be seen in the Arboretum at grid coordinates 29-1W.

ON THE COVER: The lush foliage and rich pink flower clusters of this hybrid pink locust, a *Robinia* x *holdtii*, recommend it to gardeners looking for a June-blooming tree that will grow well even on poor, dry soil. View this species at Arboretum grid locations 17-4E & 17-5E.

Taking Root

In summer, new plants take root and become well-established for years of growth ahead.

Here at Washington Park Arboretum, future leadership was recently established with the arrival of Professor David J. Mabberley. As Director of the Arboretum, Professor Mabberley oversees management of the Arboretum's magnificent plant collection and implementation of the Master Plan. You can read an interview with Professor Mabberley in this edition of the Bulletin. Please join the Arboretum Foundation in welcoming him.

The summer season is my favorite time of year! I eagerly look forward to sunny days for boating, picnicking, and of course, gardening. This issue of the Bulletin is particularly useful for changes planned in my own garden this summer, and perhaps for yours as well. Plans include the installation of a new border, primarily of Mediterranean plants, located near a raised culinary and flower bed shared with our neighbors, with a hedge of rosemary and *Rosa rugosa*, and some very healthy-looking lavender lining the path. A steep slope was recently planted with pentsemon, interspersed with beautiful narcissus, some wild-looking alliums, and several varieties of salvia, sage, iris, and a few sedges. This is all back-dropped by lilac, viburnum, *Koelreuteria paniculata*, manzanita, douglas fir, huckleberry and a carpet of low-growing Oregon grape. You will find helpful and enlightening information on some of these very plants in this issue. As always, the talents and contributions of our Bulletin editor, Lee Neff, and contributing writers are warmly appreciated.

Washington Park Arboretum is a special place to visit any time of year, and summer is no exception. Bring your family and out-of-town guests to wander through its leafy coolness. A blanket and a picnic lunch complete the day. The Graham Visitors Center and Arboretum Shop are open daily—stop in to pick up a visitor guide and to enjoy the always-fresh selection of gifts and books. All Arboretum Shop proceeds benefit the Arboretum.

Deborah Andrews

Deborah Andrews, Executive Director,
Arboretum Foundation

ABOVE: This image of "Baby Mallard Ducks," by Kevin Ebi of Seattle, won the Life in the Arboretum category of the amateur division in last year's Arboretum photo contest.

COMBINATIONS UNLOCKED

The Whys & Wherefores of Favorite Plant Combinations

10 A Not-to-be-Forgotten Feast of Pink

TEXT AND PHOTO BY POLLY HANKIN

If I am perfectly honest with myself I have to admit that most of the successful plant combinations I've created have occurred almost purely by coincidence. But that doesn't mean I don't learn from them and repeat them in new gardens with similar growing conditions and planting purposes.

One such combination thrives at our downstairs entry. After rebuilding a raised bed adjacent to a set of stairs, I decided to select plants I hadn't worked with before that would provide year-'round interest. I began the planting in the fall, to take advantage of a late October sale at a local retail nursery. I then proceeded to do what I tell every landscape

The clear pink buds of the shrub rose 'Bonica' and the new red stems and mottled leaves of *Berberis thunbergii* 'Rose Glow' enliven the barberry's dark red leaves.

design student I've ever taught *not to do.* I walked around and bought plants purely on whim. Three of these impulse purchases made it into the new bed. These were a 3-foot tall mountain hemlock (*Tsuga mertensiana*) and two barberries, *Berberis thunbergii* 'Rose Glow,' in one-gallon containers. Early the following spring I filled in the area around the three plants with a pink flowering shrub rose 'Bonica' and a single *Euonymus japonicus* 'Microphyllus Variegatus.'

As spring days lengthen, the foliage of the rose and the barberries emerge with matching hues of warm, rusty burgundy. By early May the pair of *Berberis thunbergii* 'Rose Glow' perform true to name, their new foliage glowing a warm, glorious silvery-pink, mottled with rose. By now the 'Bonica' rose has started to grow around and through its neighbors and is covered with small pink buds that open to a saturated, clear pink that brings to mind everything that little girls are made of. If you haven't figured it out by now, I'm a sucker for pink. And these plants, growing together, are an exuberant, not-to-be-forgotten, feast of pink.

Year 'Round Comfort

The beauty of the repetition of color—foliage in early spring, followed by foliage and flowers in later spring and summer—provides rich interest at our door continuing through late fall. The composition is completed by contrasting forms within the planting and the repetition of fine texture throughout the group. The hemlock presents itself as a small cone with a teepee-shaped crown. Its short, tightly packed needles create a very strong form that emphasizes the loose, vase shape of the barberries. The *Euonymus* shares the fine, dense foliage texture of the hemlock, but its globe form (maintained with a twice yearly visit by the plant hairdresser) contrasts dramatically.

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As much as I enjoy this group of plants for its harmonious combination of form, color and texture, it is my emotional response that provides the real pleasure: This plant quartet expresses my feelings about the changing seasons throughout the year. All summer long, the deciduous barberries celebrate the warmth and sunshine with a boisterous display of color. As summer passes into fall, I watch as the rose slows its bloom production but fights to keep a few new buds ready for a spell of warm sun in October. Many years I have cut a bunch of small pink buds at Thanksgiving to have them open in the warmth of the kitchen.

By December, the hemlock and *Euonymus* are standing together through the cold, dark days, shedding the endless rain like thick-coated canines. Their stoic attitude and soft green foliage remind me that light will return as the earth makes its way around the sun. The sharp thorns of the rose and barberries hold raindrops and reflect the low-angled sunshine, waiting, as I do, for a return of light and warmth.

By late January I begin to feel the pull of my garden and am grateful to have a job to do. I cut the rose back to about 16" and remove the tallest and thickest of the *Berberis* stems. The *Euonymus* stands proudly as I give it the first of its twice-yearly shearings. And then I wait, looking for small changes until mid-March when new growth on the plants lets me know we've come together through another Puget Sound winter. Once again I can look forward to six months of glorious pink! ~

Polly Hankin is a landscape architect and teaches full-time in Edmonds Community College's Horticulture Department. She is a member of the Bulletin's editorial board.

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PLANT PROFILE:

Vaccinium parvifolium

By Jane Groppenberger

Although I am not a purist, I do use a select group of native plants in my garden designs. One of these, which seems elusive in Northwest nurseries, is *Vaccinium parvifolium* or red huckleberry. In the early 1980s, as a recent transplant from the East Coast, I was introduced to red huckleberry while working in a Magnolia bluff Seattle garden. There, a six-foot specimen stood in front of heavy-leafed rhododendrons. I was smitten then and remain, to this day, a devotee of red huckleberry. My move to Anderson Island a few years ago brought red huckleberry back into the limelight as, to my delight, our surrounding woods have many of these plants scattered at the edges.

Red huckleberry is a multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub with erect growth 3 to 12 feet tall with many fine, horizontally branched twigs. Small leaves, a lovely lime-green with entire margins, illuminate the woodland scene when they emerge in spring. Yellow to reddish-yellow fall foliage passes quickly to reveal green twigs dressed with red leaf buds—perfect for embellishing Christmas wreaths and floral arrangements.

The white to greenish-white, bell-shaped flowers are scattered among leaf axils and often hidden among leaves. But the small, red, fleshy fruits that follow hang like well-placed jewels, adding to the plant's delicacy. This pea-sized fruit has a tangy flavor and is worth collecting for jelly, if you have access to a stand of these plants and the patience to collect them. But eating them out of hand is most satisfying. Or just let the birds enjoy them.

Although *Vaccinium parvifolium* is a well-known Northwest native, it is rarely introduced into gardens. I believe this shrub deserves greater attention as a companion to ericaceous plantings and in woodland gardens. Red huckleberry's tiers of lacy twigs and small leaves relieve the somber and heavy effect of rhododendrons and conifers. Planted near a path, its dainty tracery can be fully appreciated.

Red huckleberry thrives in partial shade and in humus-rich, well-drained soil. However, as a newcomer, the plant takes its time to become established. If it gets too much water, especially if the soil drains poorly, it seems to succumb in the first two years. Still, it should be irrigated the first summer after planting. After that it is drought-tolerant, as are many native woodland plants. I have seen red huckleberry growing happily in pure sand with no summer irrigation. Its penchant for growing in rotting logs and stumps is particularly charming and worth reproducing in appropriate settings.

This elegant plant was very useful to aboriginal groups living within its range. In

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LEFT: The tart, red fruit of red huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*) is beautiful on the shrub but too attractive to both birds and human muffin-makers to last long. (Photo by Joy Spurr)

INSET: At home in partial shade and moist, coastal woodlands, red huckleberry bushes are a mass of twiggy tracery, quite delicate in texture. (Photo by Richie Steffen)

addition to eating the berries fresh, they gathered them in quantities, dried them like raisins or mashed, dried and formed them into cakes for storage. The berry juice was used as to stimulate the appetite or as a mouthwash. Sore throats and inflamed gums were treated with tea made from the leaves and berries, which were also used as bait for fish. The long stems with their multiple twigs were used to make brooms.

Should you be so lucky to have property where *Vaccinium parvifolium* grows naturally, plants can be transplanted—according to Arthur Kruckeberg in "Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest"—in early winter. Otherwise, he advises propagating red huckleberry by seed, but "they must be handled through two or three transplantings before they can be put in the garden." "Propagation of Pacific Northwest Native Plants" by Robin Rose, et al, provides detailed methods of seed propagation. More simply, cuttings can be taken in the dormant season. I also find that they naturally seed in fast-draining soil, probably the gifts of birds.

Vaccinium parvifolium has many charms that befit Northwest gardens. At the feet of these choice natives, plant *Asarum europeaum* (European ginger), *Smilacina stellata* (false Solomon's seal), *Disporopsis* species, *Gymnocarpium dryopteris* (oak fern), *Achlys triphylla* (vanilla leaf) and *Heuchera micrantha* (alum root). Red huckleberries naturally occur mixed with evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), a particularly handsome combination. Backing these with conifers, such as *Chamaecyparis obtusa*, adds rich texture. Truly, this disease- and insect-free plant has great merit in Northwest gardens. ~

Jane Groppenberger (The Urban Gardener) lives on Anderson Island and gardens in the Seattle metropolitan area. She may be reached at svcaprice@aol.com.

A Chat with Professor David Mabberley

By Carolyn Jones

As most Arboretum Foundation members know, David J. Mabberley arrived in Seattle in February to take up his post as Soest Professor of Horticultural Science and Director of Washington Park Arboretum, the Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH) and the Elisabeth C. Miller Library. Since then, Professor Mabberley has been very busy getting to know the city, the Arboretum, CUH and the wider horticultural and academic communities. I had the pleasure of first meeting him at VanDusen Botanical Garden, Vancouver, Canada, prior to a lecture he gave on the botanical artist Ferdinand Bauer, in September of 2003. Our meeting led to his applying for his new post, so it seemed natural to interview him for this introduction to Arboretum Bulletin readers. The interview took place in David's apartment near the University of Washington, late in the afternoon of April 3; my own explanatory comments are inserted in brackets.

• **CJ:** *I know you have lived both in England and Australia, David, but where did you spend your childhood?*

▪ **DM:** On a mixed-enterprise (arable and dairying) farm in the Cotswolds [Gloucestershire, England].

• **CJ:** *With that rural childhood, when did you first take an interest in plants?*

▪ **DM:** My late mother said it was when I was four, and that's why she gave me a book of wildflowers.

• **CJ:** *Did you have any particular favorite plants? Were you interested in natural history in general, or just plants?*

BRYAN TAULBEE

▪ **DM:** I was interested in natural history in general but more in plants. I had a collection of rocks, of fossils, of bird nests and skulls; I collected flowers in a little herbarium. The Cotswolds have a rich flora because of the limestone.

• **CJ:** *I can just picture that boyhood! And tell me about your school days.*

▪ **DM:** I was sent away to [boarding] school [Rendcomb College, Gloucestershire] at the age of 11. I had an extremely good biology master named Christopher Swaine. Although he was a zoologist, he was indulgent to my interest in plants.

• **CJ:** *How fortunate. Was he your biology master for the whole time you were at that school? Is he still living?*

▪ **DM:** Yes, he taught me right up to Oxford entrance exams. Unfortunately, he is no longer living, but his son is also a university botanist. [David also played rugby and learned to paint in watercolor in those early years.]

• **CJ:** *Tell me how you ended up at Oxford. What were your career goals in those days?*

▪ **DM:** It is customary for good English schools to prepare and put their best pupils forward for entry exams for Oxford and Cambridge universities. I wrote a scholarship

examination and won a scholarship to Oxford. From the age of 13, I knew that I wanted to be a botanist in a university setting. In the British system, one chooses a 'major,' as it is called in the United States, before one goes to university. The British system is more pre-ordained but also more efficient.

• **CJ:** *What appeals to you about university life?*

▪ **DM:** It combines teaching, which I enjoy very much, with writing and doing research, all on plants.

• **CJ:** *I share those same passions. Tell me how academic life is structured at Oxford.*

▪ **DM:** At Oxford, one applies to a college, each teaching all subjects, the colleges forming a federation that is the university. One is accepted by a tutor [David's was Barrie Juniper, an electron-microscopist, but also an authority on apples] who organizes your course work and any appropriate fieldwork through your entire undergraduate course of study. Lectures are given by various professors, and one completes a weekly research project that is presented to one's tutor. There are no textbook-based courses; primary reference material is suggested and other pointers indicated, but the responsibility for working up a topic, and therefore learning, falls primarily on the student.

• **CJ:** *So I've heard from other English people. So what led you to do a Ph.D.?*

▪ **DM:** In my second year at Oxford, in the long vacation [equivalent to summer quarter at the University of Washington], I was botanist on an undergraduate-organized expedition to East Africa. I found a research topic that intrigued me. About that time the greatest tropical botanist of his age, Professor E.J.H. Corner (of Cambridge), gave a lecture at Oxford. I was fascinated and wanted to pursue a Ph.D. under his supervision. After graduating from Oxford I spent a whole year in East Africa and Madagascar doing fieldwork. I spent the following two years writing up my thesis at Cambridge.

• **CJ:** *That was on pachycaul [tree-like plants with grossly stout stems] senecios and lobelias, was it not?*

▪ **DM:** Yes. I studied their systematics and ecology and put forward an evolutionary hypothesis of their origins.

• **CJ:** *Someday I'd like to hear more about that research. I understand that you have a doctorate from Oxford too.*

▪ **DM:** Yes, I went back to Oxford where I had been offered a post-doctoral fellowship. I worked on the mahogany family [Meliaceae] with fieldwork in Borneo, New Guinea and tropical Southeast Asia. That work was developed into a monograph and other publications. From that point forward, I concentrated on economic plants generally.

• **CJ:** *What amusing incidents stand out from all the fieldwork you have done?*

▪ **DM:** Fieldwork is dangerous. I nearly lost my life on a number of occasions: I was charged by an elephant, the brakes failed coming down Mt. Meru in Tanzania, and being with the British Army in Panama was a catalogue of disasters.

• **CJ:** *My goodness. In your travels, you must have visited many botanical gardens and arboreta. In your opinion, which stand out and why?*

▪ **DM:** The most spectacular is the garden [Royal Botanical Gardens] at Peradeniya, near Kandy in Sri Lanka. It was laid out in a majestic way by the British, with double avenues of palms, a huge orchid collection, and it is beautifully looked after. Bogor [Botanic Garden] in Indonesia was similarly laid out by the Dutch colonists. Both are very educative [with signage and interpretation for the casual visitor], and both are enormously important botanical collections.

In terms of temperate gardens, [Royal Botanic Gardens,] Kew has an extensive collection, an impressive rock garden and unparalleled greenhouses. Collections are organized taxonomically and ecogeographically. It has an outstanding satellite garden at Wakehurst [Place].

Berlin has a very important collection of trees. It has the oldest significant ecogeographic collections in the world and was one of the first gardens to be organized this way, rather than strictly taxonomically.

• **CJ:** *David, tell me what drew you to this position in Seattle?*

▪ **DM:** It is one big job. For the past years I have been doing lots and lots of interesting but relatively small or short-term jobs, all over the world. Dealing with so many was not as satisfying as one big thing. When I realized how big a job it would be—and would be for the rest of my career—I became interested.

• **CJ:** *What are Washington Park Arboretum's strengths?*

▪ **DM:** It has a very significant tree collection, a devoted staff and a master plan. By comparison with other such institutions, there has been great cooperation between all the entities involved. It is linked to a major center of learning, and both the collection and the university are of international significance.

• **CJ:** *You've told me that you enjoy teaching, and we all know what a huge job you've undertaken. If you have time to teach, what will the focus of your classes be?*

▪ **DM:** My post in the College of Forest Resources is professor of economic botany. I have taught this subject as an international course at the University of Leiden for many years, with people coming from America to take it.

• **CJ:** *Even if you don't have time to teach a full course immediately, perhaps you'll share that information with the community in workshops or lectures. On a different tack, tell*

continues on page 33

Some Books by David J. Mabberley

Available at the Miller Library

Mabberley, David J. "Arthur Harry Church: the anatomy of flowers." London: Merrell and the Natural History Museum, London, 2000.

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Watts, Peter, Jo Anne Pomfrett and David Mabberley. "An exquisite eye: the Australian flora & fauna drawings 1801-1820 of Ferdinand Bauer." Glebe, N.S.W.: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 1997.

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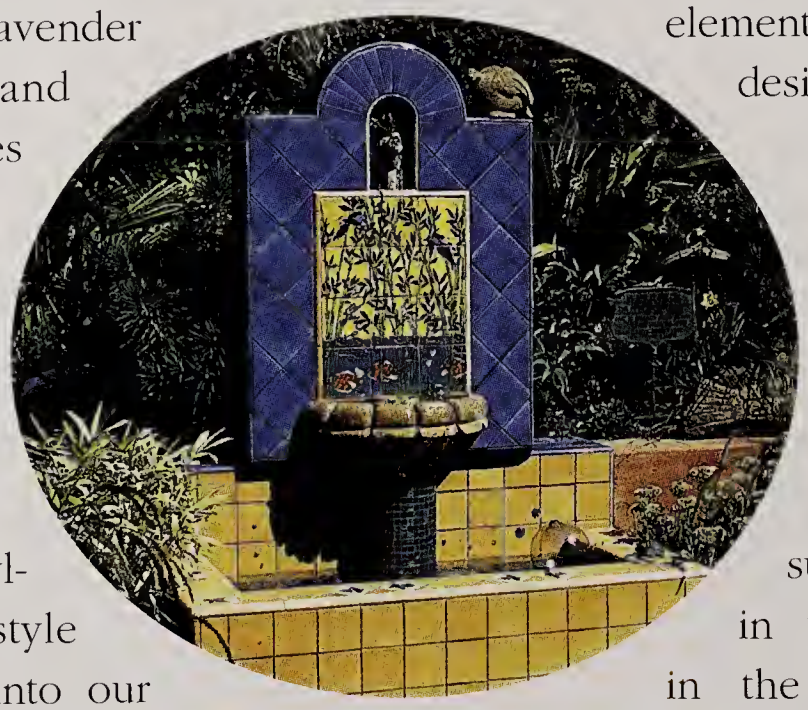
Mediterranean Gardens

TEXT & PHOTOS BY PHIL WOOD

Gardens redolent of lavender and rosemary and graced with touches of classical antiquity can be an inspiration to Northwest gardeners. We share a similar climate and cultural history with the Mediterranean region, so a good working knowledge of Mediterranean style can help us incorporate into our gardening efforts the two essential elements of great gardens, good design and marvelous plants.



The concept of a Mediterranean climate was introduced to me in a series of articles that ran in this publication. Mediterranean climates have wet winters and dry summers; plants that thrive in these conditions do well in the Northwest. Besides the Mediterranean itself, other similar climate

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ABOVE: *Cupressus sempervirens*, Italian cypress, provides an exclamation point to anchor a tapestry of low water use plants.
INSET: A tile fountain adds color and a Latin touch to this garden.

areas include South Africa, the West Coast of South America, parts of Australia, as well as our own North American West Coast. Here in the Northwest we are at the northern and cooler reaches of the wet winter/dry summer zone, but Mediterranean nonetheless.

Mediterranean Influence

Our own Northwest garden style is still under construction. We are new at gardening here, just a few generations, and are still developing our plant palette, learning what grows well in our climate. One thing is certain: water resources are finite and population is growing. Our gardens will be using more water-wise plants. Of course we will still love and grow plants needing extra water in the summer—grouping them together for ease of care and efficient use of water. As we turn more and more to plants suited to our climate for the majority of our plant palette, we will move toward a style that fits the environment and looks at home here.

In addition to climate, the Northwest has a shared culture with the Mediterranean, the cradle of Western civilization. We are at the far reaches of Western culture, and we hold its aesthetic values in our collective unconscious. Even though we have the opportunity to gain from the Asian design influences that come from being on the Pacific Rim, we also have inescapable ties to Greek, Roman and even older design ideas that remain a touchstone.

The Mediterranean has provided a rich source of design inspiration to me. I admire classical geometry in the hardscape, the built elements of the garden. I am attracted to design with what I call strong structure and loose planting, or, as the British garden designer Penelope Hobhouse calls it, "formality and exuberance." The gardens of Italy and southern France speak to me in this way. The formal aspects of courtyards, paths and stone

Centering on a millstone, *Thymus*, thyme, creeps into the gravel circle.

walls create a framework for a loose assemblage of plants—in short, give structure to the collector's garden. And aren't we all plant collectors?

I am particularly drawn to the way stone is used in the Mediterranean hardscape, in paths and walls. Stone is an important element of natural landscapes in the Northwest, and we can echo that by incorporating stone into our gardens. While I admire a well placed outcropping, too often stone in gardens looks as if it has been dumped out of a truck. I like well-built stone walls and terraces, which Mediterranean gardeners were crafting before the Etruscans.

Most of the Mediterranean plants gardeners are familiar with grow in one of two types of vegetation groups. In French, one is called *maquis*; the other, *garrique*. "*Maquis*" is described as the first stage of degradation of the deciduous forests that once were found in the region. *Maquis* consists of shrubby trees or evergreen shrubs. When the *maquis* is grazed or burned, the resulting vegetation is called "garrique," consisting mostly of dwarf evergreen shrubs. Try this in your next casual conversation: "We are reproducing a small patch of *garrique* in our front yard. Aren't you?" While I'm not suggesting we turn the Northwest into a copy of the south of France, I do think that Mediterranean plants can point the way to an attractive, low water-use solution for sunny sites with well-drained soil.

Preparation & Mulch

The jury is still out on the best way to prepare soil for a Mediterranean garden. Some gardeners advise that we do the opposite of what is usually recommended: do not enrich the soil with additional organic material. Others suggest that all soils benefit from enrichment. Certainly, poorly draining soil will not be good for Mediterranean plants, so if you have soggy clay areas, find other types of plants or add a foot or so of freely draining soil on top of the clay. If your soil is not clay, but heavily compacted, your task is to increase drainage by loosening the soil by spading or tilling.

Mulching with gravel is also an option. Many Mediterranean plants like sharp drainage, and gravel mulch will keep water away from their crowns. When planting, leave the top of the plant a few inches out of the ground, and mulch the bed with two inches of gravel. The most readily available gravel is "five-eights inch minus," which includes all sizes of crushed rock, five-eighths inch in size and smaller. For a finer look, you may be able to find one-quarter inch minus gravel.

From my experience, adding organic material can produce good results. Late in the winter of 2002, a couple asked me for assistance in designing a low water-use garden. They had stopped watering their large lawn in the front of their house, and we discussed the idea of a Mediterranean garden. For soil preparation, we asked the landscape contractor to till 3 inches of compost into sandy soil, and the results were spectacular. Plants were installed in April 2003, and by fall, what had looked like a sparse new planting was full. We used the strategy of mixing perennials and shrubs: perennials fill in quickly so shrubs can take their time. The owner observed that the first year she applied about as much water as for a lawn; by the second year, last year's hot summer, the garden thrived with almost no water.

Good Plant Selection

What plants should you choose for your garden? For a tall, broadleaf evergreen, try *Laurus nobilis*, the true bay laurel used in cooking. Give it plenty of room. I have one in my garden in Wallingford reaching to 15 feet in as many years. I know when I planted it, because in the winter of 1991 it was 2 feet tall, and all of its foliage above snow level froze and turned black. It has been untouched by cold since then. In cooler areas

at higher elevations, you may want to maintain it as a container plant that can be brought inside in sharp freezes. *Arbutus unedo*, strawberry tree, is a more familiar broadleaf evergreen and can be grown as a large shrub or a tree. *Arbutus unedo* 'Elfin King' is a dwarf selection reaching 8 or so feet at maturity. *Prunus lusitanica* (Portugal laurel) and *Viburnum tinus* (laurustinus) are two more shrubs from the region that do well here. *Cupressus sempervirens* is, of course, the classic conifer, lending its exclamation point to many a garden.

"You may be taking a trip to the Mediterranean, even if you don't leave your garden."

Lavandula (lavender) is a classic low-growing Mediterranean subshrub. Plant several types, and you may develop a personal favorite. You could also collect the genus *Rosmarinus* (rosemary) from the tall 'Tuscan Blue' to the creeping prostrate form. *Cistus* (rockrose) is a genus with many suitable species and cultivars. One of my favorites is *C.* 'Sunset,' with magenta pink flowers, because it stays 2 to 4 feet tall.

Many herbaceous Mediterranean plants also do well in low summer water conditions. *Salvia* (sage) provides colorful, drought-tolerant plants thriving on well-drained soil. *Salvia* x *sylvestris* 'Mainacht' (May night) has indigo spires of bloom to 2.5 feet. Many other beautiful sages offer both colorful bloom and silver-green leaf texture; some are tender in the Northwest but can winter over in a mild winter. Perennials from the genera *Euphorbia*, *Achillea* (yarrow) and *Sedum* (stonecrop) are also indispensable.

Northwest Natives

Interest in Mediterranean plants can also be a door into our own native flora. Having admired the plants of the Mediterranean that thrive in a dry summer, with their panoply of textures, colors and aromas, I realize that we have a wonderful group of plants right in our own area. Perhaps I just thought of them as too common, growing up with salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), low Oregon grape (*Mahonia repens*) and sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*) in my own back yard. I now see them as a resource for both planting design and fostering wildlife habitat. Most of the Mediterranean plants I am familiar with are full-sun plants, although there must be some adapted to shade. On the other hand, I think of our Northwest flora as thriving in the shade of Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and cedars (*Thuja plicata*). I am just becoming familiar with natives thriving in open sunny areas. Manzanitas and penstemons come to mind.

Using a mix of plants from the Mediterranean and from other dry summer areas, including West Coast natives, will bring a full complement of well-adapted choices to our gardens that are both ornamental and low in water use. Mediterranean plants thrive in poor, stony soils and need less mulch and fertilizer than usually required to sustain many garden plants.

We have touched on just a few plants. Several nurseries in the Seattle area specialize in plants from Mediterranean climates: Mesogeo Greenhouse on Bainbridge Island, Piriformis in Fremont, Colvos Creek Nursery on Vashon Island, and Steamboat Island Nursery, west of Olympia. Enjoy exploring the possibilities awaiting you on what used to be the lawn just outside your front door. You may be taking a trip to the Mediterranean, even if you don't leave your garden. ~

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Summer Blooms On

By Christina Pfeiffer

Think summer trees—and it is hard not to think of relaxing in the shade of lush green leaves rustling in cool breezes. Spring is vibrant with the early blooms of magnolias and cherries gracing long bare stems. As summer wanes, we look forward to the magic of glorious fall foliage. But for many gardens, trees recede to the background during summer. Yet amid that green backdrop lies a wealth of arboreal bloomers that can bring another dimension of color and fragrance to the summer garden.

Some of the flowers are subtle, like the small clusters dangling from pale green bracts on lindens. Robust *Catalpa* trees boast oversized leaves and blooms, followed by strikingly long,

Beloved for its orange and gray patchwork, exfoliating bark, as well as its large, camellia-like flowers, individuals of the *Stewartia pseudocamellia* Koreana Group may have even more brilliant red fall color than the species.

WOODY STEMS — TREES

cigar-shaped seed pods. The fine features of *Stewartia* species bring elegance to the woodland garden, with branches dotted with small camellia-shaped flowers at mid-summer.

Trees have been described as the backbone of the garden. Large and long-lived, they bring dimension and definition to garden spaces. A well-placed, striking specimen becomes a focal point. Grouped together, trees provide sheltering shade for plants and garden visitors. As we enter natural spaces, adults and children alike are drawn to the embrace of trees, for limbs to climb on, or shade to rest beneath. The quality of our gardens, of our very lives, would be diminished without trees.

Many garden tree selections contribute to the color and texture of summer and then offer repeat performance with autumn color and interesting winter bark. There are several of petite dimensions, suitable to the smaller garden, such as sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) or fringe tree (*Chionanthus* species).

Gardening amid trees can present challenges, but with some consideration of where and how tree roots grow, they need not be too daunting.

■ The majority of fine feeder roots for most trees occupy the upper 12 inches of soil, so it is best not to cultivate repeatedly broad areas of soil beneath established trees.

■ When adding companion plants, choose smaller stock, and don't try to place plants too close to tree trunks.

■ Select companion shrubs, bulbs, ferns, and perennials that naturalize well and don't require annual digging and dividing.

■ Match the watering requirements of surrounding plants to that of the existing or newly planted tree, but don't allow irrigation spray to wet the bark repeatedly.

ABOVE: A drought-tolerant tree with fern-like leaves and upright, frothy pink-tipped blooms from July to September, the silk tree, *Albizia julibrissin*, lends an almost tropical air to the garden.

■ Protect the root collar—the flared area where the trunk meets the soil line; it should never be covered with soil or mulch.

Spend some time this summer discovering the treasure of flowers, color, and scent that abound on woody stems. Here's a short list to get you started; use it to wander the Arboretum collections on a treasure hunt of trees in bloom.

Aesculus indica—Indian horse chestnut

This *Aesculus* strikes the pose of a typical shade tree, until the tall pyramidal panicles of white blooms appear in mid summer. Cultivar *A. indica* 'Sydney Pearce' has darker green leaves with 12-inch flower spikes and matures near 50 feet in height. With its spiny fruit, it is best in garden beds that can easily absorb fall litter. (Arboretum—Japanese Garden)

Albizia julibrissin—hardy silk tree

Looking very tropical with its pale, fern-like leaves and broad horizontal branches, this tree captures the spirit of warm summer days. Upright tufts of pink-tinged blossoms held high above the foliage continue from late July to September. Reaching 40 feet tall, it is best grown in an open, sunny space where there is ample room for its limbs to spread. Drought-tolerant, *A. julibrissin* grows quickly; it is relatively short-lived but a beautiful garden tree. (Arboretum grid 21-2E)

Catalpa x *erubescens*—hybrid catalpa

With its very large, rounded leaves and robust, fragrant, white flower panicles, this large, 50-foot tree strikes the image of a super-sized perennial on steroids! Blooming in July and August, each bell-shaped flower is dotted with purple markings. By summer's end, long skinny seedpods droop from each limb. This is a large-scale specimen tree, fitting as a focal point in a large, open garden space. Similar *Catalpa bignonioides* is native to low woods and streamsides in the Southeastern United States. (Arboretum grid 13-B, 14-B)

Chionanthus virginicus—fringe tree

This rarely seen, delicate tree is coated with a generous fringe of fleecy white, fragrant blooms in early summer. Native to the eastern United States, it bears longer flower panicles than the Chinese species, *Chionanthus retusus*. *Chionanthus virginicus* is the smaller of the two at 10 to 15 feet. Site both in light shade and moist but well-drained soil. (Arboretum grid 11-4W)

Clerodendrum trichotomum—harlequin glorybower

Pale, jasmine-scented blooms appear in July and August, a sweet prelude to the powerful, metallic-blue fruit backed by dark pink calyxes this plant is best known for. A small tree at 15 feet, *Clerodendrum trichotomum* tends to form thickets unless pruned to keep one trunk. (Arboretum—Graham Visitors Center)

Cornus kousa var. *chinensis*—Chinese dogwood

Just as the rush of spring bloom fades into June, Chinese dogwoods enter with blankets of white-pointed flower bracts along each branch. *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis* 'Summer Stars' and 'Milky Way' are among some of the finer cultivars. Slow-growing to about 30 feet, in sun or at woodland edge, it prefers moist but well drained soil. (Rhododendron Glen 11-3E)

Cotinus coggygria—European smoke tree

A rugged, drought tolerant species, *Continus coggygria* trains beautifully into a small 20-foot tree. Fading blooms leave a cover of smoky plumes that last the summer. It grows beautifully on sunny sites with infertile soils. The more subdued American *C. obovatus* forms a lovely, slightly taller specimen. Both have stellar fall color. (Arboretum grid 37-4E, 1-4E)

Franklinia alatamaha—Franklin tree

Single white flowers open in late summer, staying on to highlight brilliant red fall leaves. An uncommon but worthy small garden tree of the camellia family, this eastern United States native was discovered and collected in

1765, perhaps never seen again in the wild. It grows to 20 feet in height, best on organic soils in a sheltered spot receiving morning sun. (Arboretum grid 11-6E)

Koelreuteria paniculata—golden rain tree

A great midsize tree for urban sites, *Koelreuteria paniculata* is adaptable to many growing conditions. A late summer bloom of yellow, erect flower clusters appears in July and August. Pinkish seedpods stand out like tiny paper lanterns amidst pinnate foliage. *Koelreuteria paniculata* is slow growing to 30 feet. A striking, drought-tolerant species, it merits broader use in Northwest gardens. (Arboretum grid 44-5E)

Lagerstroemia indica—crape myrtle

Newer cultivars, such as *Lagerstroemia indica* 'Muskogee' and 'Natchez,' have made the late summer blooms of crape myrtle a possibility in cool Northwest summers. Vase-shaped trees to 30 feet, crape myrtles are best placed in the warmest spots for best bloom potential. (Arboretum grid 39-1E, 33-1W, Center for Urban Horticulture)

Ligustrum lucidum—glossy privet

Creamy-white flower clusters in dramatic contrast to dark, evergreen foliage add fresh brilliance to the late summer season. Growing to 30 feet, privet is beautiful and rugged for street or garden plantings. (Arboretum—Japanese Garden)

Magnolia grandiflora—Southern magnolia

Creamy white, saucer-shaped, fragrant flowers appear through the summer against the large, glossy leaves of this 45-foot evergreen. Plant in protected, sunny sites, and rich soil. Many cultivars are found for this species. (Arboretum—Magnolia collection)

Oxydendrum arboreum—sourwood

Another later summer bloomer with bright red fall color, this slow-growing, narrow tree is a treasure for the small garden. It is ericaceous, with arching lily-of-the-valley blooms. (Arboretum—throughout)

Robinia x *ambigua* 'Idahoensis'—hybrid locust

The June flowering of this hybrid locust adds fragrance to the rarity of purple blossoms among summer-blooming trees. Growing to 40 feet in height, it performs well on poor, dry soils. This legume has compound leaves and the brittle branches common to the species. (Arboretum grid 17-4E)

Stewartia species

It is tough to choose among these three elegant species of *Stewartia* offering delicate white summer blossoms: Japanese *S. pseudocamellia*, with peeling, patchwork bark; taller *S. monadelpha*, with bright orange, flaking bark; and the smaller Virginia stewartia, *S. malacodendron*. All are outstanding in the light shade and moist soil of woodland gardens. (Arboretum grid 11-6E, 11-5E)

Styrax japonicum—Japanese snowbell

Japanese snowbell is a lovely, airy, small garden tree, with tiny, fragrant white blooms delicately hanging beneath small oval leaves in June. *Styrax japonicum* 'Emerald Pagoda' has more leathery leaves and larger flowers. (Arboretum grid 19-1W, 32-B, 38-B)

Syringa reticulata—Japanese tree lilac

Creamy, fragrant lilac blooms emerge in June after the shrub lilacs have ended their show. A round-headed, drought-tolerant tree for sunny positions, it grows up to 30 feet tall and is suitable for use as a street tree. (Arboretum grid 6-1W, 13-3W, 14-3W, 16-4W) ~

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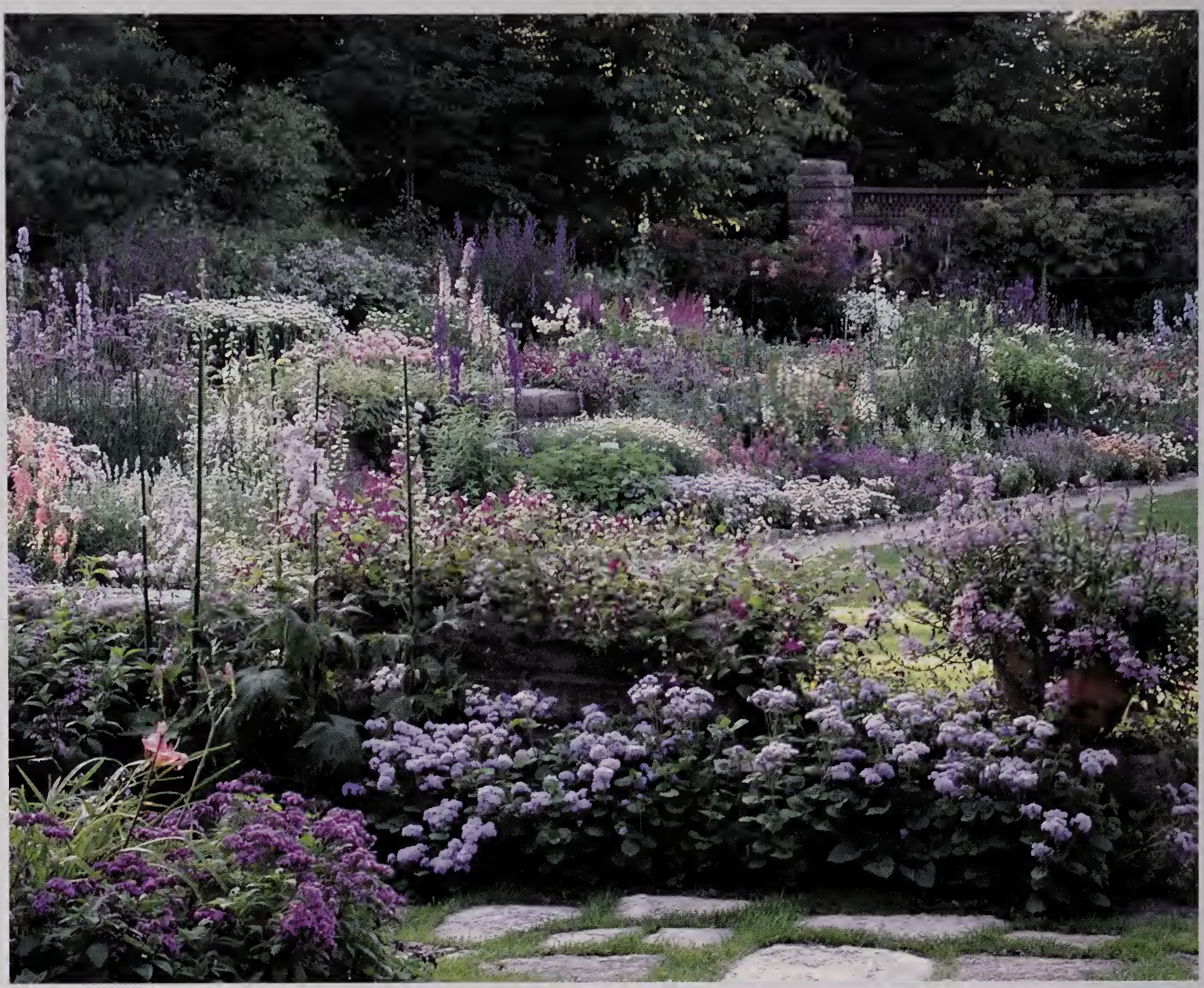

Beatrix Farrand: A Landscape Gardener's Legacy

By Linda Plato

Have you ever visited Dumbarton Oaks, the remarkable garden in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington D.C.? Or been fortunate enough to tour the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden in Bar Harbour, Maine? This beautiful summer garden is still privately owned by the Rockefeller family, so admission is by invitation only. But even if you have only had the good fortune to visit Dumbarton Oaks, you already know a bit about Beatrix Jones Farrand, one of our country's first landscape and garden designers.

Life & Learning

Born in 1872, Beatrix Jones joined a family of independent thinkers. Her mother, Minnie, was raised in circles of political and artistic sophistication, meeting Henry James and William Thackeray and even two American

ABOVE: This contemporary reinterpretation of Beatrix Farrand's design for the cool side of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden—rich in subtle pink, purple, blue and mauve plantings—fulfills her plan that it be best viewed in diffuse daylight.

presidents before she married Freddy Jones of Manhattan. Beatrix's parents divorced when she was 10, but, nevertheless, she continued to be surrounded by adults who encouraged intellectual pursuit. Her uncle, John Cadwalder, was a distinguished New York lawyer who founded the New York Public Library. As Diana Balmori reports in her book on Beatrix Farrand's design work, when Beatrix expressed a wish to become a landscape gardener—unheard of in late 19th century New York City—her uncle said, "Let her be a gardener or, for that matter, anything she wants to be. What she wishes to do will be well done." And not to be overlooked, Beatrix's aunt was the novelist Edith Wharton.

When she was in her late teens, Beatrix met Charles Sprague Sargent, director of the Arnold Arboretum, in her mother's drawing room. Sargent and his wife invited Beatrix to come live with them in Brookline, Massachusetts and study as Sargent's horticultural intern. This was a rare opportunity to learn, as the first formal landscape architecture program (Harvard University) would not open until 1900. Even then, it would admit only men.

As Bernice Kert reports in "Abby Aldrich Rockefeller: The Woman in the Family," while in Brookline, Beatrix "observed closely how he [Sargent] and Frederick Law Olmsted laid out the grounds of the arboretum. She absorbed his deep love of plants, his respect for nature, his commitment to research. Her entire professional career reflected two of his basic dictums, to 'make the plan fit the ground and not twist the ground to fit the plan,' and to 'carefully study the tastes of the owner.'"

After four years, Sargent suggested Beatrix study the great gardens of Europe. Off she went, where she met, among other influential thinkers of the time, William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll. She returned from Europe in 1895 and established her landscape gardening business in her mother's New York brownstone.

In 1899, when she was just 27, Beatrix became one of the eleven founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). She was one of two women founders. At this stage in her career, with capital provided by her Aunt Edith Wharton, Beatrix moved her office outside of her mother's home, soon opening additional offices on Mt. Desert Island, Bar Harbor, Maine, where her family kept a summer home, and New Haven, Connecticut. In 1913, when she was 41 years old, Beatrix married Max Farrand, chairman of the Yale History Department. In 1927, when Max became director of the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, Beatrix closed her Connecticut office but kept the Maine and New York offices open, often commuting across country by train.

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.

One of Beatrix's first and most widely known gardens is Dumbarton Oaks in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C. Her clients were Robert and Mildred Bliss. Robert Bliss was a wealthy French diplomat, and when he and Mildred returned from France, they purchased Dumbarton Oaks, a Federal style-house and gardens in need of repair. Having become good friends with Edith

IF YOU DECIDE TO VISIT

Dumbarton Oaks is open to the public. For more information, see www.doaks.org/Gardens.html.

Garland Farm is open to the public through the Garden Conservancy's Open Days program. This year it will be open on August 7 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit www.gardenconservancy.org for more information.

For information about the Beatrix Farrand Society, visit their Web site at http://members.aol.com/savegarlandfarm/.

Wharton while in France, and because she was impressed with Beatrix's work, Mildred Bliss hired Beatrix in 1921 to help her develop the gardens. Beatrix would continue her work at the Oaks until 1946.

Beatrix's design for the Oaks was a mixture of neoclassicism and arts & crafts. Her solution to the property's steep slope was a series of terraces that begin quite formally and gradually fade into the natural landscape. Each terrace centers on a singular theme. For example, the Pebble Pool Terrace hosts an elaborate pebble mosaic pool.

Custom ornament was a specialty of both Mildred Bliss and Beatrix Farrand. With a custom cabinetmaker on site full-time, Beatrix's ornament designs would often be mocked up in wood so that Mildred could live with them over a period of seasons—or years—before committing to a more permanent concept.

Like many gardeners, the Blisses enjoyed incorporating elements of their travels into the garden. In one instance of neoclassic formality, Beatrix designed a clipped hedge of American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) into an ellipse that centers around an antique Provençal fountain the Blisses brought back from France.

The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden, Bar Harbor, Maine

Abby and her husband, John D. Rockefeller, owned, among many other estates, the sixty-five room, Bar Harbor cottage on 16 granite bluff acres known as the Eyrie. Much like Mildred Bliss, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller admired professional young women. She hired Beatrix to help her create a garden that would incorporate traditional European garden design as well as Asian garden elements. On a trip to China in 1921, Abby and her husband collected several Korean tomb figures, as well as tiles from the Forbidden City. Abby was enthralled with the Chinese culture. Bernice Kert reports her delightful comment, "I'd much rather be a Buddhist than a Baptist." She loved the temples, with their gold and lacquer, the beat of the drums, the smell of the incense. "I think you could get more women to belong to a Bible class if you could have a stage set like that. . . ."

Incorporating the two distinct styles was a tall order for any designer. Beatrix designed a walled garden that casually but forcefully segues between the two distinctive styles. Along the long axis from the gatehouse is the spirit path, a raked gravel path lined with the Korean tomb figures. Plantings here are "natives in a designer-ly fashion," or large clusters of foliage texture including the native blueberry. At the end of the spirit path is a memorial stele dating to 576 A.D. Parallel to the spirit path is the wall within the walled garden that divides the Asian garden from the sunken garden, home to a most abundant collection of perennials and annuals.

It should be noted that the current plantings do not reflect Beatrix's planting plan. However, the architecture of the space, including the bottle and moon gates, is very much from Beatrix's hand.

Reef Point

After her husband Max died in 1945, Beatrix turned her energy into developing Reef Point Gardens Corporation at her family's Bar Harbor, Maine, summer home on Mt. Desert Island. She began publishing the "Reef Point Bulletins," including information on the estate's botanical garden, library, and plant trials.

In 1947, a peat bog fire swept through Mt. Desert Island and destroyed many of the island's magnificent homes. Reef Point was spared, but visitation to the grounds and library were significantly reduced. Beatrix's savings had dwindled, as she had used a large sum of money to rebuild the house, reorganize the garden, build new outbuildings for staff and visitors, and to arrange the collections. Property taxes on Mt. Desert rose dramatically to cover the costs of rebuilding the island. Soon Beatrix realized that the Reef Point Gardens

Corporation could not be a lasting concern, and she decided to dismantle the corporation.

Many of the plants and collections were relocated to nearby Asticou Azalea Garden and Thuya Gardens. The herbarium, her library (2,700 volumes), her drawings, and Gertrude Jekyll's drawings were donated to the University of California, Berkeley, because of Max Farrand's connection with the university. Beatrix sold Reef Point to developers and purchased a small farm for her friends, Amy and Lewis Garland. Amy had been the chief horticulturist at Reef Point; her husband Lewis, the handyman and chauffeur. Beatrix built a small cottage connected to their farmhouse, and it was here, Garland Farm, that she spent her final days.

Garland Farm

Unlike the grand estates of Maine or Dumbarton Oaks, gardeners easily relate to the intimate scale of Garland Farm. The grounds consist of the front "Asian" garden and the sunny formal gardens in the back.

The front yard is rectilinear, with a bluestone path leading from the drive to the front door. Boxwood hedges and a tidy picket fence create an enclosure for Beatrix's favorite Japanese and native plants.

In the back, Beatrix placed her herbaceous plant collection, including several heaths and heathers. The garden is laid out to complement the three rooms facing it. Patrick Chassé, writing in "The Last Gardens of Beatrix Farrand," explains it best: "The garden, enclosed by a carved wooden fence from Reef Point, consists of a series of rectilinear "parterres" with gravel paths between. The plan is highly axial and ordered, while the plantings within the beds are flowing masses—giving a more informal overall effect. The central panels, opposite Farrand's study, are mostly heaths and heathers from her global collection, interplanted with lavender. Panels of mixed perennials and annuals lie outside the other rooms, along with a narrow border all around the inside of the fence.

"The back garden was integrated visually into the adjacent living spaces by French doors, opening out from each room, and windows overlooking the garden. This garden featured several favorite ornaments: granite millstones—used as landings for each of the three sets of French doors—a lead cistern (now residing at Thuya Garden), a cast bird bath, and a sculpture of Buddha. The structural backdrop, outside the fence, is formed primarily by a composition of three Japanese cherry trees—believed to be un-named hybrids from the Arnold Arboretum—asymmetrically planted, and surrounded by shrub roses and other shrubs from Reef Point." Beatrix lived in this setting until she died in 1959.

The Beatrix Farrand Society

The Beatrix Farrand Society (BFS) was established on June 16, 2003, firmly guided by Beatrix's motto, "Give me understanding and I shall live." Patrick Chassé is the director. With financial assistance from the Garden Conservancy, Garland Farm was purchased by the Society in 2004. The BFS seeks to reinstate Reef Point's original educational goals at Garland Farm, hoping to install a substantial reference library for the study of horticulture, botany, design, landscape architecture and architecture; and a design archive of garden, landscape, and residential architecture documents and photographs. The plant collections of the existing gardens and possible revival of regional trial gardens will provide a strong horticultural component. Instruction is again a key goal, with a lecture and seminar program, and a regional summer internship program for horticulture, design, garden history, and landscape management students to be based at Garland Farm.

All of these ambitions fittingly honor a worthy American pioneer in the art of landscape and garden design. As her uncle said of her, "Let her be a gardener or, for that matter, anything she wants to be. What she

continues on page 33

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CRUISE WEST

ABOVE: A collection of wildflowers frame the breadth and detail of the Alaskan tundra: from the top, left corner, clockwise, the chocolate lily (*Fritillaria camschatcensis*), a wild iris (*Iris setosa*), capitate valerian (*Valeriana capitata*), and Alaska violet (*Viola langsdorfii*).
BELOW: Kuspuks sway in the summer Arctic breeze to pulsating Eskimo drums, beating out ancient dance rhythms.

Eskimo Summer

By Steve Lorton

At a few minutes past 9 a.m., the captain came on the ship's public address system and announced, "we are now north of the Arctic Circle."

My wife, Anna Lou, and I were on *The Spirit of Oceanus*, having joined a Cruise West adventure tour circling the Bering Sea. It was a sunny day, but the wind was brisk and chilly, in the mid 40s. We were wearing our windbreakers, and I had a stocking cap pulled comfortably over my head and ears. There were just fewer than 80 passengers on our small ship and nearly an equal number of crew. Our fellow passengers were bundled, snapping pictures, peering through binoculars, making notes. These are serious people and later I came to realize that there is not one among them that I would not be happy to have as a next-door neighbor.

In the two weeks to come, we traveled the icy waters across the Bering Strait, down the east coast of Siberia, then headed south, touching islands, until we reached Dutch Harbor. Finally, we followed the startlingly beautiful string of islands up the Aleutian archipelago to Anchorage. Little did any of us know the vastness of the beauty that lay ahead or how deeply we would feel about the Far North once the trip was over.

Re-learning an Old Lesson

At least twice a day, often more frequently, one of the educational staff presented a highly informative lecture on history, flora and fauna, culture, geology, or what was coming next. One of our shipmates had instructed me that the term Eskimo is politically incorrect. We would be visiting Yup'ik and Cup'ik peoples. I couldn't do it. The words got tangled on my tongue and, besides, I'd be hog-tied if I were going to refer to myself as an Anglo-American. My petulance was vindicated many times over as we visited the villages of these noble and enchanting people, and those who spoke English referred to themselves repeatedly as Eskimos. I couldn't think of a more beautiful and all-inclusive word for what I was about to engage.

And although the dancing and the walrus ivory, the sightings of whales and grizzlies, the visits to colonial Russian Orthodox churches all awaited our discovery, I was most interested in the plants. I gazed out on the frigid, cobalt waters before us, having come from the barren landscape around Nome. Plants? It wasn't promising. Still, by the time the launches were loading to take us onto Little Diomede Island, I was ready. A copy of my Alaska field guide was safely wedged between my back and my belt, under my parka. I would come to re-learn an old lesson. While the book, the naturalist who traveled with us, and my own enthusiasm were essential, the real key to my education would come from the people who lived in the places we were about to visit.

"I Can't Help It. I'm Always Happy."

Little Diomede Island was no more than a tall, flat-topped, steep-sided, rock, rising out of the sea. A cluster of tiny, weathered-wood houses clung to the slopes. I wondered how people lived there on this spot of stone, rising from a cold ocean, until I remembered that this was summer. When winter comes in late September, the Bering becomes a vast prairie of ice where dogs pulling sleds travel for miles as they have for millennia. And people trek long distances, always fearful that they might be swallowed up by a blizzard.

Just a few miles away Big Diomede (Ratmanov Island in Russian) stood as a painful reminder of the Cold War. The little island is American; the big island is Russian. The natives moved freely between the two, easily connected eight months out of the year when the sea was frozen. Siblings and cousins shared the two islands, indifferent to national boundaries. Then, one day, travel between the two was forbidden. Shortly after that, the residents of Big Diomede were moved to the Siberian coast, never to be seen again by their relatives.

A smiling native woman named Diane spotted us as we trudged up a trail hoping to find plants. She was wearing a "*kuspuk*," a loose and pretty overdress made of finely printed calico, worn over slacks and warmer upper garments. In two weeks on the Bering Sea, fully 85 percent of the women were wearing kuspuks. I never saw two alike. But the fabrics were always similar, a solid background and an intricate print of assorted small blossoms and leaves—a lovely, colorful and unsophisticated kaleidoscope of natural forms. Somehow the kuspuk seemed as connected to the culture as any native costume I had ever seen.

Diane joined us on our walk, as curious about us as we were about her. She was far less willing to ask questions than we were. I said to her, "You seem happy." She responded. "I can't help it. I'm always happy." "Have you always lived here?" I asked. "I went to Anchorage for a while. But I had to come back." "Why?" I asked her. "I missed our food and the picking."

Later I would learn, in detail, what Diane meant by picking. At the Alaska Native Heritage Center, in Anchorage, Esther, who came from King Island, about 70 miles southeast of Little Diomede, explained summer picking. First comes the salmon berry, sometimes called cloud berry (*Rubus chamaemorus*), followed by blueberry (*Vaccinium uliginosum*). The low-bush cranberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) is usually ripe in early September and is said to be tastier when picked after a frost. Esther also mentioned blackberry. She was probably talking about *Rubus arcticus*, which crawls through the tundra and spreads on underground runners. In late July and early August, its small raspberry-like fruits are red and very tasty. I speculated. Certainly Vitus Bering, the Danish explorer who named these islands for Saint Diomede, traded for and feasted on these fruits when he came through in 1728. Perhaps those berries were gathered by ancestors of Diane and Esther.

The Tundra's "Tangled Beauty"

On the third day of travel we entered Russia. After customs in the grim Gulag city of Provideniya with its decaying Stalinist architecture, we got our first look at the tangled beauty of tundra on the Chukotka Peninsula. Rarely more than ankle high, the vegetation was a tightly woven mass of hundreds of species thriving atop a spongy medium that made you bounce as you walked. The leathery, veined leaves of *Salix rotundifolia* contrasted with the tiny leaves and pink blossoms of *Rhododendron camtschaticum*, which has flowers very much like *Epilobium latifolium*. I spotted Swedish dwarf cornel (*Cornus suecica*), monkshood (*Aconitum napellus* ssp. *vulgare*), Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium caeruleum* ssp. *villosum*), Labrador tea, *Rhododendron tomentosum* (syn. *Ledum palustre*), and *Arctostaphylos alpina*. The tundra was beautiful and inexhaustibly interesting. Looking to the ground, the carpet of vegetation was a symphony of small leaves, fruits, and blossoms. I had the urge to walk for miles with my camera pointed straight down, framing and clicking, coming up with one rectangle filled with beautiful shapes and colors after another. I wanted to take it home and hang it on the walls.

Suddenly there was a scream. A fellow passenger, an older and always exotically dressed Russian woman who had immigrated to the United States, was nearby. It was a

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Eskimo Summer *continued from page 26*

scream of recognition and delight. She shouted "Golden root! Golden root!" then stooped to pull up a plant of *Rhodiola rosea*. It's known as roseroot or king's crown in Alaska. She brushed the dirt from the plant as I asked her what it is used for. "Everything! Everything! Wonderful! Wonderful! The cold! The headache!" She bit into the root and chewed it. Later that night, back on the ship, I looked for her at dinner. She was at her favorite table in the far corner, holding court. She was still alive.

On the beach near the Eskimo village of Novoye Chaplino a beautiful native woman named Ludmilla was gathered around a small fire, brewing tea, with a group that included another woman, three walrus hunters and a Russian from Provideniya who spoke English and their native dialect. With his help, I asked Ludmilla what she had on the bow of their hunting boat. I was told it was wild celery (*Angelica lucida*). I asked what it is used for. Ludmilla looked at me as she spoke, and the Russian translated, "When we cook fish, we flavor the fish with the stalks. The root is also good for colds and congestion." Ludmilla was wearing perhaps the most beautiful kuspuk I had seen so far. I complimented it. "She makes them herself," the Russian told me. "She makes them for her mother and her grandmother and all her family."

Near Savoonga

Near Savoonga on Saint Lawrence Island, the Eskimos are American, the language and customs show the influences of Siberian Yu'pik. Walking in the village I found myself beside a young native dancer named Tyler Noongwook and his friend Adora. She had a sprig of cotton grass in her hand, *Eriophorum scheuchzeri*. I asked her, "Do you pick flowers to take indoors?" She nodded once and said, quietly, "Sometimes we do." I looked across the dirt road we were walking on to a little Eskimo house. There was a bottle, containing wildflowers, on the windowsill.

Also near Savoonga, I encountered another group. The men wore jeans and ski jackets. Again, the women were in beautifully made kuspuks, all with different patterns. Each was wearing a collection of necklaces that looked to be assembled from a hodgepodge of costume jewelry beads restrung into opera length strands. Harriet Shavings was there with her husband Samuel. Harriet's mother, Alice, was also there, as was Samuel's father, Edward Shavings, a village elder. These were jolly people. The women were pretty and plump, and they laughed freely. I was swept into the mood and the merriment.

I asked Harriet what her native name is. She said something that involved gentle growling and slapping of the tongue against the teeth. I said, "but your English name is Harriet?" And then something odd happened, something rooted in antiquity. Harriet said, "Yes, my missionary name is Harriet." I said, "Missionary name?" And her mother, Alice, looked at me and said, "Cossack name." I looked at Alice and said, "Cossack name?" And Alice nodded. "Cossack name." I pursued the question, but all was lost. From that point on everything was met with an affirmative nod and no more words.

Then Alice turned around and broke off a piece of cow parsnip, *Heracleum lanatum*. With the nails of her index fingers and thumb she striped the outer fiber off the stem, exposing a fleshy, green stalk. She broke the stalk in half and then reached down into the grass beside her and pulled out a Snapple iced tea bottle filled with amber oil. Samuel smiled and said, "seal oil." Alice opened the bottle, dipped one piece of the stalk into the oil and ate it. Then she took the second half, dipped it into the seal oil and handed it to me.

(Lord help me! *Heracleum?* Isn't this the hemlock that killed Socrates? Seal oil?)

I ate it. Not bad. And at dinner that night, I was still alive, looking across the room at the

Russian woman. And she was still alive. But it was 48 hours before I got the taste out of my mouth, and several more days before the pungent flavor of seal oil left my toothbrush.)

Both Samuel and his father Edward spoke impeccable English along with their native Yup'ik and some Russian. Samuel asked his father Edward to tell me how true Eskimo ice cream is made: grate dried reindeer fat, whip in seal oil, then water until it gets a fluffy texture. Add sugar. Then stir in freshly picked berries. His eyes sparkled and he smacked his lips.

Then I said to Edward, "I admire you all so much. You use everything. You do not waste anything." What followed would have been a Walt Disney moment if it hadn't been for the fact that it was not a Walt Disney moment. Edward became suddenly pensive and stared out over the Bering Sea. He paused. And then in a deep, resonant, and infinitely noble Eskimo voice he said, "Yes. The Earth is a living organism. We are all parasites on that organism. If we do not take care of the host, we will all die."

Nature's Gifts

I was overwhelmed. It had to stop there. So I said my "thank-yous," did my bows and left. But as I went, Edward handed me a small black stone. "Here. This one is good to sharpen a knife on. You can use this."

I have the stone. It will go to a grandchild.

Long before I was ready, we sailed south, out of Eskimo territory. And, of course, I long to go back. And I keep thinking about those beautiful, uncomplicated faces and the women in their kuspuks with the intricate floral prints. I remember my Midwestern aunts who cross-stitched tulips and violets on table linens and bought peanut butter packed in drinking glasses that were decorated with daffodils and delphiniums and daisies. I've seen Hawaiians in their shirts with bright, bold flowers and lush leaves, Austrian house fraus with edelweiss on their aprons and Japanese women with plum blossoms and bamboo on their kimonos. And in it all, I've seen that it's true—art often really does imitate nature. People design, taking inspiration from natural forms, celebrating the most beautiful things they see around them.

Those Eskimo women were celebrating, giving thanks, praising nature, loving the beauty before them. For on their intricately printed kuspuks, they were wearing the tundra. ~

Steve Lorton is Northwest Bureau Chief of Sunset magazine and a member of the Editorial Board of the Bulletin.

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A New Community Library

BY BRIAN THOMPSON

PHOTOS BY JANE ST. GERMAIN

How do you design a library in the days of the Internet? Why would anyone leave home when Google can apparently answer any known question? Or, if a gardener, why would you take off the gloves and kneepads to make a special trip to a horticultural library?

Emma, Laura and Kira Blumhagen in the Children's Corner

These types of questions face all new libraries and were on the minds of the staff and design team of the Elisabeth C. Miller Library during the planning and building of the library's new space in Merrill Hall, reopened at the Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH) in January of this year.

Fortunately the Miller Library was not the only Seattle library planning a new building at the time. Much of our homework had already been done for us by the Seattle Public Libraries (SPL), planning their innovative and daring new central library and remodeling many branch libraries.

The research of Rem Koolhaas and Joshua Ramus, architects for the SPL central library, found "that people are not ready to give up on books and that they are not ready to give up on libraries...."[1] The study goes on to warn, however, that potential patrons have higher expectations for ease of use and customer service.

Providing this type of can-do service has long been instilled in the staff of the Miller Library, as highlighted in the article by Valerie Easton in the Spring 2005 issue of the Bulletin; and this attitude was shared by the architectural and interior designers for the project. Following are some of the ways this goal and vision were translated into reality.

Community

"The traditional library as a physical place retains value and social identity in its community," writes Mary Augusta Thomas of the Smithsonian Libraries.[2] With exposed infrastructure and glue-laminated beams, the Miller Library hardly recalls the traditional Carnegie model, but first-time visitors are quickly drawn in by the light and spaciousness to join with their fellow readers and researchers.

Reference and Information Desk

Like a well-designed garden, the main reading room is easily parsed into smaller spaces, each with a distinctive feel. The formal reading corner with leather chairs allows readers to settle in and catch up on their favorite periodicals from the

(1) Goldberger, Paul. High-Tech Bibliophilia, The New Yorker (5/24/2004).
(2) Thomas, Mary Augusta. Redefining Library Space: Managing the Co-existence of Books, Computers, and Readers. The Journal of Academic Librarianship, Volume 26, Number 6, p. 410 (November 2000).

hundred or so on close-by display. More casual patrons can recline on the colorful, built-in benches of the Children's Corner, so named for the growing collection of materials housed there for kids of all ages, and the parents and teachers who work with them.

The Miller Library serves several overlapping communities and often brings students, faculty, researchers, professionals and hobbyists together in pursuit of their common interests. One such meeting place is the new Program Room, which provides workspace for groups to interact without disturbing other library visitors. This room also allows an expanded schedule of library classes, tours and displays.

New entry cases housing exhibits and displays welcome visitors at the library's door and showcase more connections. In the first few months this space has already housed an exhibit by Pacific Northwest Botanical Artists and a joint display (by the library and CUH's Otis Douglas Hyde Herbarium) of preserved specimens of toxic weeds and invasive plants and recommended books about them.

An even larger community has been drawn to CUH by the "green design" found throughout Merrill Hall and described in detail by Sue Nicol in the Winter 2005 issue of the Bulletin. For these tourists, a must-see in the

VISIT THE NEW ELISABETH C. MILLER LIBRARY

To see for yourself, join a drop-in tour on the first Monday of any month (except holidays) at 7:00 p.m. A library staff member will give a 45-minute introduction to the library as well as to the "green" features of Merrill Hall.

Or drop in at any time during library open hours (Monday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and after Labor Day, Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.).

library is the meter that measures the electricity being generated by solar panels on the roof. Even more dramatic are the three Urban Hardwoods tables made from salvaged trees, including the stunning elm wood table taken from a tree fallen by Dutch elm disease.

Current periodicals

Flexibility

The mechanically inclined are immediately drawn to the Miller Library's compact, mobile shelving units. At the touch of a button, up to three tall shelves will slowly glide aside, opening a new aisle (don't worry, a sensor prevents any fallen book from being squashed, let alone a browsing human). While cool to watch, the real purpose of these shelves is to provide high-density housing for the library collections, particularly the historical back issues of periodicals and other, less-used materials.

Effective work habits vary from person to person, and so the library provides several choices of workspace. In addition to chairs and benches, carrels allow for more privacy, while traditional tables with built-in lamps invite spreading out. The small reading room for the library's special collections is also suitable for those requiring a truly quiet study space behind a closed door.

The public computer terminals serve different needs, too. You might settle in at one of these comfortable carrels to search the Internet, or to use software and other electronic resources available only at the library. Meanwhile, at another station, your friend can be watching a DVD or videotape program.

Others only need a quick check of the library's catalog, easily done on one of the computers at the stand-up counter next to the reference desk. For even faster action, bring along your Wi-Fi laptop; antennas are positioned throughout the library to guarantee strong reception.

Transparency

Architects speak of transparency as "the ability to look inside from outside, making library collections and services seem more accessible," according to Brian Kenny, senior editor of the Library Journal.[3] At the Miller Library this works both ways, as nearly floor-to-ceiling windows in the southwest and northwest corners bring the natural light inside and give the visitor spectacular vistas, especially toward the Union Bay Natural Area.

Transparency can also speak of access to library resources and services. Perhaps you harbor in your mind a model of librarian as formidable gatekeeper, permitting access to closed stacks by only a privileged few. Now nearly all Miller collections, except for rare books and a few other archival or fragile materials, are in the public space.

This concept applies to services as well. The Plant Answer Line desk, home base for the library's phone, e-mail and Internet reference services, is not hidden away but prominently located front and center next to the public reference desk. This not only allows easier access to reference materials for the person staffing the desk, but also emphasizes the importance of these virtual services in the 21st century library.

Altogether, a visit to the Miller Library is an enriching experience that will only improve as collections grow and more programs, classes and services are offered. Please come by for a visit! ❧

Brian Thompson is Curator of Horticultural Literature at the Elisabeth C. Miller Library.

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(3) Kenney, Brian. The Library Reloaded. Library Journal, Volume 128, Number 20, p. 9 (December 2003 supplement).

David Mabberley *continued from page 11*

us a bit about your two years as CEO of Greening Australia.

▪ **DM:** We had a paid staff of 150, plus casuals, part-time employees and volunteers. We worked with stakeholders—farmers, community groups, local and state authorities—to revegetate degraded areas in order to reduce erosion and salinization and increase biodiversity. We had offices all over the state, from arid to rainforest ecosystems. We always used local-provenance seed in our nurseries.

• **CJ:** *That experience will prove useful in managing the "wild" lands under your purview. And what changes to the Arboretum would you like to put in place over the next ten years?*

▪ **DM:** We should implement as much of the master plan as possible. We will work first on the "Pacific Connections"—a series of ecogeographic plantings north of the stone cottage. They will represent the plants of Chile, Australia, New Zealand, East Asia and Cascadia. Azalea Way should be renovated. The staff must be properly housed, with a curator and more horticultural staff in place so the Arboretum can be maintained to an international standard. The staff numbers per acre are lower than any major arboretum or botanic garden in the United States right now, which is a disgrace for an internationally significant collection.

• **CJ:** *Although I've lived in Seattle for less than two years, I understand that in the past there have been two directors—one of the Washington Park Arboretum and one of the Center for Urban Horticulture. Now these are combined in one position.*

▪ **DM:** Part of my brief is to bring these organizations, as well as the [Miller] Library, closer together and under one umbrella. We have to find the common threads that unite them. For example, CUH now does all the propagating for the Arboretum. Both have natural areas (Union Bay and Foster Island). Both are concerned with plants, conservation and education.

With that final thought of common threads, I wished David Mabberley the best of luck—with my own thoughts of how lucky we are to have him in our community—and let him get on with his evening. ∾

Carolyn Jones is Director/Curator of the Elisabeth Carey Miller Botanical Garden.

Beatrix Farrand *continued from page 23*

wishes to do will be well done." It is up to her admirers, now, to continue to remember and honor her well. ∾

Linda Plato designs gardens in the Seattle area. For more information about Beatrix Farrand or Plato's design business, contact Linda at 425-827-5438 or Linda@lindaplato.com.

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